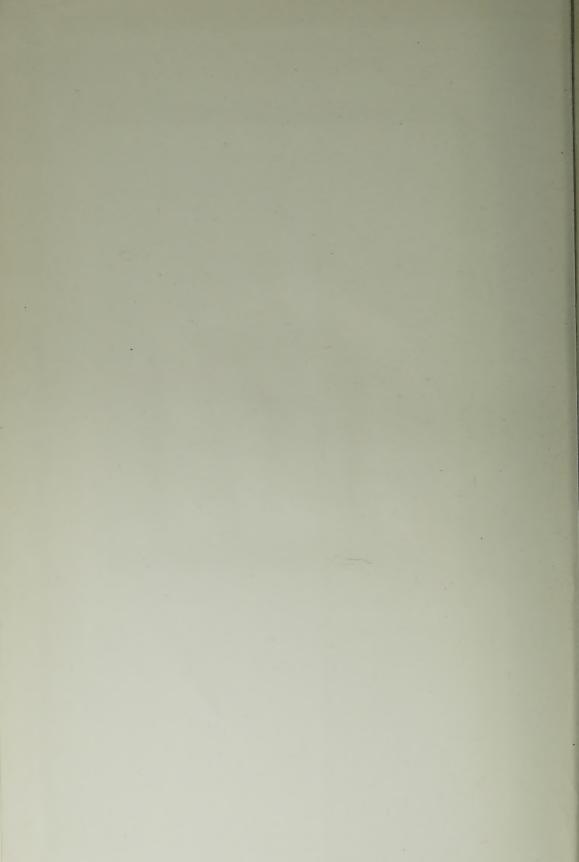
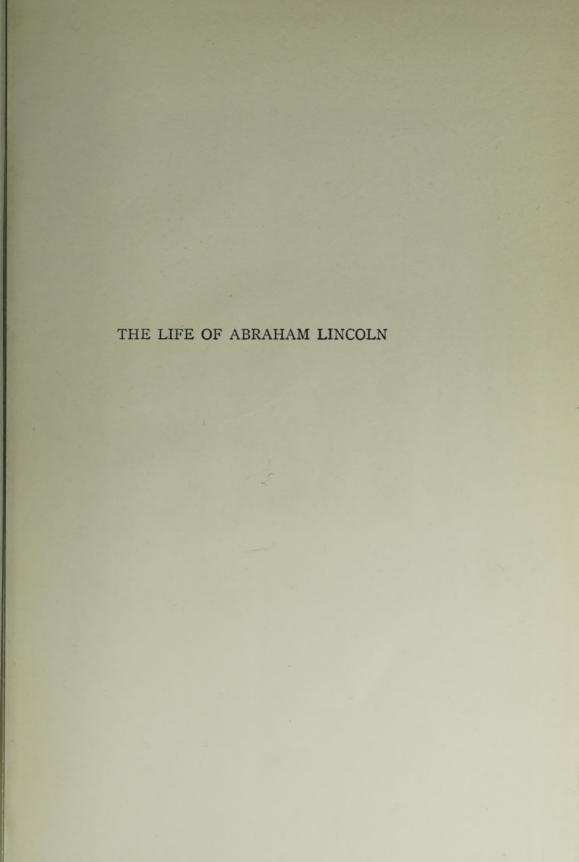
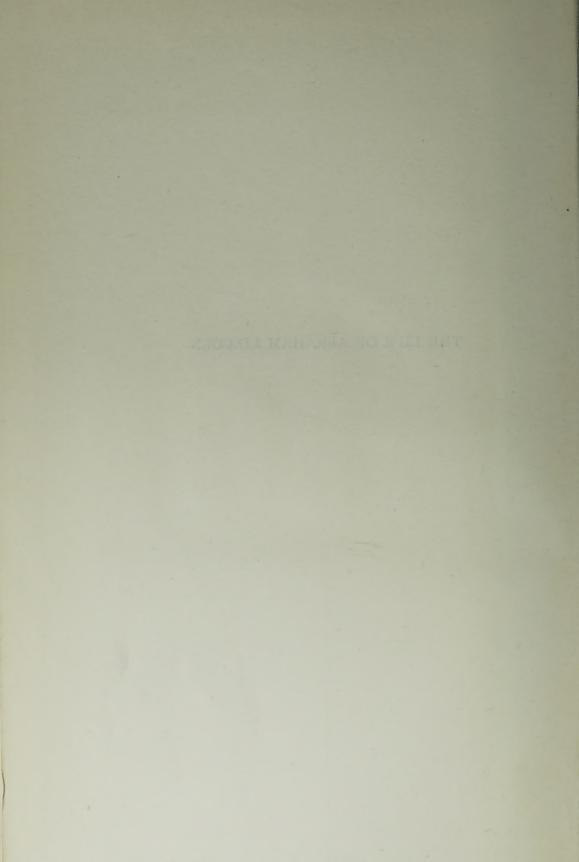


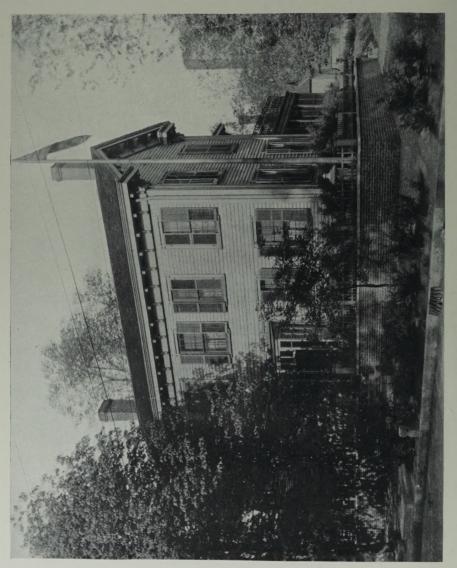
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S SPRINGFIELD HOME Photographed for this work by Eugene J. Hall

THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WILLIAM E. BARTON

Author of The Soul of Abraham Lincoln, The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln, Etc.

VOLUME ONE

ILLUSTRATED



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To CALVIN COOLIDGE

Like Lincoln a Man of the People and a Leader of the Nation This Work is Dedicated With His Permission



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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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I have come to this task with a conviction of duty and the joy of a rare privilege. I was born in Illinois in the first year of the Civil War. My earliest memories are a child's wondering impressions of the departure of the last volunteers in the spring of 1865—my father's youngest brother among them; the funeral of a soldier, an uncle of mine; the north-bound trains of freight-cars on the Illinois Central, loaded inside and out with bearded men in faded blue, shamelessly throwing kisses to every woman in sight, and none of those women resenting it; and, in some respects most vivid of all, the death and funeral of Abraham Lincoln.

I passed the years of my boyhood among men who had known Lincoln. The years of my early manhood I spent as teacher and circuit-riding preacher in the hills of Kentucky and Tennessee among people akin to Lincoln and living as the Lincolns lived. Subsequent years brought me unusual, if not unique, opportunities of travel and research regarding Lincoln, till I had traveled in his footsteps the whole of his life journey.

I could not say of this book that its story of the birth of Lincoln was written in the cabin where he was born and the story of his death in the room where he died, and everything between in similarly appropriate places; the actual writing has been done under conditions more favorable to methodical literary composition. But if such a statement were to be made of the notes on which this biography is based, it would be far within the truth; I am confident that no biographer of Lincoln can have covered the actual ground as I have covered it, or visited the scenes associated with Lincoln's life so frequently or methodically as I have been able to do.

But I am not thinking of this book as chiefly justified by the aggregate of miles its author has traveled or the number of people whom he has interviewed, nor by the thousands of letters he has written and received. I am thinking rather that not many men of my generation have had such opportunities as these for learning about Lincoln, and that mine is the only generation







THE GRAVE OF ANN RUTLEDGE
Petersburg, Illinois

The original grave Old Concord Cemetery Rutledge lilac bush McGrady Rutledge farm



that can combine the judgment of a sixty years' perspective with a body of testimony gathered at first hand from people who knew Lincoln. Whatever biographies of Lincoln the future may produce, this combination of direct testimony and historic perspective is possible now, and will never be possible to the biographers of any later generation.

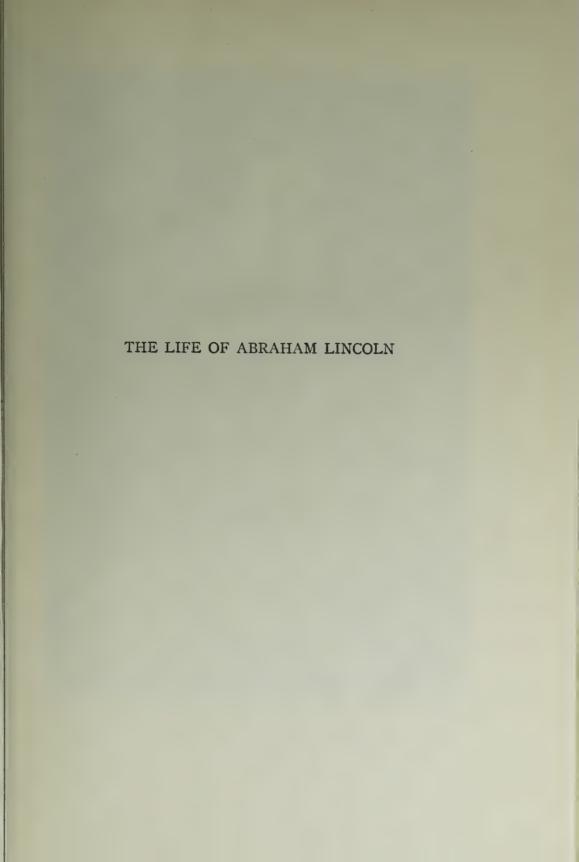
I can not adequately thank the hundreds of correspondents and friends who have assisted me, but I must mention my special obligations to the Honorable William H. Townsend, of Lexington, Reverend Louis A. Warren, of Morganfield, Honorable Joseph Polin, of Springfield, Honorable L. S. Pence, of Lebanon, Honorable Otis M. Mather, of Hodgenville, Honorable R. C. Ballard-Thruston, of Louisville, Mrs. Jouette Cannon Taylor and Miss Nina Visscher, of Frankfort, and the Misses Mary A. and Martha Stephenson, of Harrodsburg, all of Kentucky; Professor James A. Woodburn, of the University of Indiana, and Honorable Albert J. Beveridge, of Indianapolis; Professor L. E. Robinson, of Monmouth College, Mr. Oliver R. Barrett, of Chicago, Mrs. Jessie Palmer Weber and Miss Georgia L. Osborne, of Springfield, Miss Caroline McIlvaine, of Chicago, and Miss Bernice V. Lovely, of Colchester, Illinois; Mr. A. H. Griffith, of Fisk, Wisconsin; Doctor Herbert Putnam, Mr. A. P. C. Griffin, Doctor Charles Moore and Mr. William Adams Slade, of the Library of Congress. This is a most meager list compared with the number to whom I am indebted, but I can not mention all, and I must not omit these to whom my obligation is so great. I must mention, however, the libraries that have given me most valued aid. These are the State Historical Libraries of Massachusetts, Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, Wisconsin and Kansas; the Newberry Library of Chicago and that of the Chicago Historical Society; the McLellan Collection in Brown University; the Draper Collection in the Library of the University of Wisconsin; and the Durrett Collection in the Library of the University of Chicago. I reserve for special mention the Library of Congress, especially the Manuscript Division and the remarkably efin this present work. But the book, The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln, taken as a whole, is reliable, and, as I believe, a permanent contribution to knowledge. The essential conclusions of both these books are assumed in this present work; for the evidence on which these conclusions rest, I refer to these two books themselves.

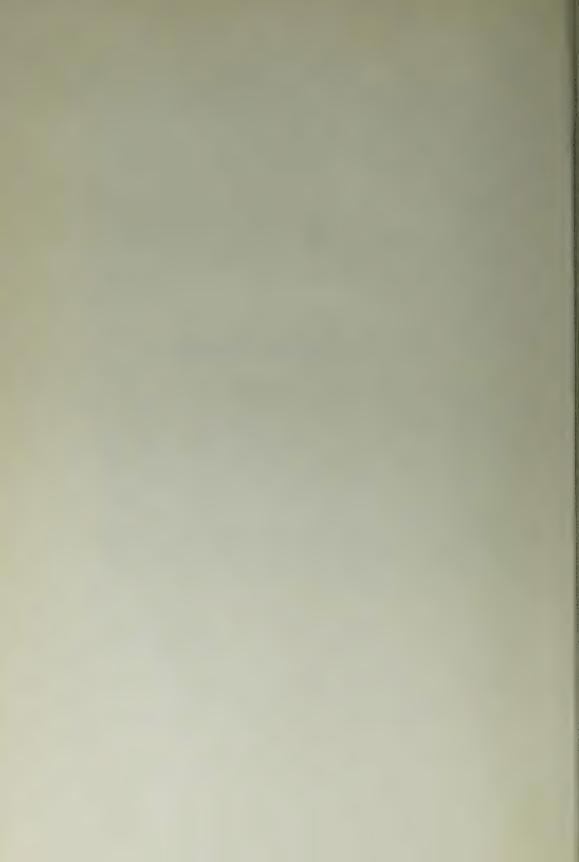
As the first draft of this book was written in my vacations, certain portions are reminiscent of places where I have sojourned for periods of rest and service. Some of the earlier chapters were written in the Mission Inn, at Riverside, California, and others in the Coronado Beach Hotel, and still others on the shores of Puget Sound, in the library of my friend, Professor Clark P. Bissett, of the University of Washington. Some of the last work was done amid the happy surroundings of Lake Placid Club in the Adirondacks. In these and other places I received marked courtesies which it is a pleasure to remember.

This manuscript, which has been several years in writing, and has traveled with me in whole or in part on innumerable journeys wherein I have followed the life trail of Lincoln, and also from coast to coast, accomplishes its final revision in a remote and quiet place where for many years I have had my summer home. The little lake beneath the windows of my Wigwam gives it a rippling smile of farewell, and the pine trees that for many summers have seen it unpacked and wrought over and packed up again, murmur after it a fragrant Godspeed. And I am thankful in this quiet spot for the strength and opportunity that enable me thus to bring to a close the labor of many years.

WILLIAM E. BARTON

The Wigwam on Sunset Lake, Foxboro, Massachusetts.







MARY TODD LINCOLN From photograph in Springfield about 1858



THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BIRTHPLACES of eminent men are not selected with reference to the convenience of tourists and historians. If there had been an American traveler in London in 1564, and he had cared to ride across the moors to bear congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Shakespeare on the birth of their son, William, his guide-book, if he had possessed a guide-book, would have afforded him little assistance. Stratford-on-Avon was then a long, long way from London, and few people in that city had ever heard of the squalid village where the greatest creative genius that ever spoke the English tongue lay, as he later lived, undiscovered. Not many of the gentlefolk of Edinburgh or Glasgow, or even of the scholars in the universities of those two cities, could have directed a traveler to the "clay-biggin" at Ayr, where Robert Burns lay in a built-in bed. Even now the fast trains thunder through Ecclefechan, a name which feels like a Scotch thistle in the mouth of him who essays to pronounce it properly, and most of the passengers, en route for their boats at Liverpool, have no suspicion that they are passing the home where Thomas Carlyle, even in his infancy possessed of "that diabolical thing, a stomach," once lay kicking with colic. As for Bethlehem, only the angels knew the way thither; the Magi had to stop in Jerusalem and inquire.

Abraham Lincoln was born three miles south of the present

site of Hodgenville, in what is now Larue County, Kentucky, on Sunday morning, February 12, 1809. Hodgenville has a courthouse and several taverns and stores and a garage and a railway station and a school and some churches and enough inhabitants to make up a small town; but there was no court-house or store or school or church or village there when Lincoln was born. The larger county of Hardin, of which the present Larue was then a part, had only one town, Elizabethtown, or, as it was then and still now is often abbreviated. Etown. Abraham Lincoln never saw Hodgenville, and he stumbled over the spelling of the name, when, after his nomination for the presidency, he tried to tell just where he was born. The Hodgen family was there in Lincoln's day, and they had a mill, but the Lincolns did not commonly patronize it, the Kirkpatrick mill being nearer, and they moved away from that locality before Abraham ever rode a horse to mill. Hodgenville is now a town with a place on the map, and has come to fame because of a man whom it never knew and who never knew of it until many years after the event which linked their names together.

Of all the presidents of the United States, only Theodore Roosevelt was born in a large city, and he escaped to the plains. Birth in a log cabin is not an absolute prerequisite to a presidential election, and several millions of Americans have been born in log cabins who have not lived in the White House; but all in all, a log cabin has proved as good a place as any in which to be born if a man intends to be president. William Henry Harrison was the first presidential candidate to capitalize the fact, but Andrew Jackson was elected twelve years before Harrison, and his birthplace also was a cabin. Millard Fillmore was born in a log house, and rocked in a split-log sap-trough, thus reversing Samson's riddle, for out of the sweetness came the strong. James A. Garfield was born in a cabin, and this is by no means a complete list. Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin.

There is variety in log cabins. There are small cabins and

large cabins; cabins with open spaces between the logs, and cabins with split chinking daubed with clay or even smoothly covered with plaster; cabins with doors and windows and cabins with just openings-maybe a blanket or a bear-skin hung in the aperture; cabins with the earth for a floor and cabins with puncheon or even with a floor whose boards were sawn at the mill: cabins with stick-chimneys and cabins with stone fireplaces. The one-room cabin is the germ-cell of American architecture. The cell becomes two cells, two log structures set end to end with doors facing, and an open space between, the two fireplaces being usually, though not invariably, at the two ends, and the roof-timbers extended across the open space. Then a third cell may be added for a kitchen at the back, the three architectural units adjoining each other like three black squares of a checkerboard, with the open porch as the white square enclosed by the black on three sides. Other units may be piled upon the top of these three, or over the front two, and the open porch becomes a long cold hall, with a staircase rising out of it. By this time the structure has become a good example of Colonial architecture, and may, if one likes, be weatherboarded, and painted white, with a portico in front, the columns surmounted by Ionic capitols.

There are "round-log cabins" and "square-log cabins." In each case the shape of the house itself is the same; it is the logs that are left round or are squared by hewing. Primitive American cabins were all, or practically all, round-log cabins; those built of hewn logs were a sign of prosperity.

There was not much hewing of the logs that framed the cabin where Abraham Lincoln was born. The cabin was of one room, had a door in the side, and a stick-chimney at the left hand as one entered the door. There was an unglazed window, closed by a hinged door, but it is doubtful if that was there when Abraham was born. There probably was not a single nail in the entire structure. What chinking there was between the logs we may not now know, but in most cabins of this character there was no lack of ventilation.

One day, many years ago, when I was teaching in an old log schoolhouse in Kentucky, a boy kicked with his bare foot through a crack between the logs at a boy who was passing on the outside, and the boy outside caught his foot. The crack was not large enough for the boy outside to pull the inside boy out, nor yet for the inside boy to pull the outside boy in, and so I caught them in their misdemeanor. That was an unusually large crack, caused by a curve in one log and a large knot in its neighbor log. But often when I slept in cabins that would have been well populated even if I had not been there, and the doors were shut and there were no windows, I was not wholly sorry for the daubing that had fallen off and the chinking that had dropped out or perhaps had never been.

Fuel was abundant, and if the stick-climney caught fire, the accident was practically certain to occur when the family was awake and the blaze could be extinguished with a gourdful of water, the hissing noise of whose falling drops upon the blazing logs below made rather a cheerful sound. Fires did not often occur at night, at least not late at night, for the fire was covered with ashes before the family went to bed.

Good housekeepers did not let their fires go out. A few years ago, a log cabin in Missouri was torn down, and a fire extinguished on a hearth where it was alleged to have burned for eighty years. It was even claimed that before the beginning of that eighty-year period, the fire had been transported in an iron pot by day hung from the axle of a wagon, to new camps night by night, all the way from Kentucky where, it was said, it had alternately blazed and smouldered as occasion required ever since it was brought in another iron pot through Cumberland Gap from old Virginia about 1790. We may discount such a story somewhat, and suspect that there may have been a few occasions in the century and more when it had been necessary to borrow fire from a neighbor; but those occasions had probably been infrequent.

There was doubtless a good fire in the cabin on February 12,

1809, when Abraham Lincoln was born. It was the season for good fires, and Thomas Lincoln, who had been in Elizabethtown at court during a part of the week preceding, returned home before Sunday. So there was fuel enough. There was probably enough of everything else, as judged by the standards of the time, but the equipment of the cabin was meager.

The bed where Nancy Lincoln lay with her baby beside her had one leg, driven in the earthen floor, with a side-rail running to the wall on one side, and a foot-rail running at right angles to the other wall. There may have been a bear-skin on the floor where little two-year-old Sarah sat and played. There was probably a rough table, made by Thomas Lincoln, and there may have been two or three stools and as many chairs.

The bed was probably not uncomfortable. There was almost certainly a feather-bed on top of the straw or husk mattress, and there were homespun blankets and coverlets. Thomas and Nancy Lincoln owned livestock and poultry, and there was presumably milk for Nancy and the baby, besides the simple luxury which may have been afforded by fresh eggs and fried chicken. There was enough to eat and there was shelter and rude comfort. People who have never slept in log cabins are likely either to idealize them or to exaggerate the hardship of living in them. Life in a log cabin lacks much of luxury, but it is not necessarily uncomfortable. I have never lived in a cabin, but I have spent many days and nights in them, and conditions had not greatly changed from those of Lincoln's childhood.

Considering the unsanitary conditions under which the greater part of the human race is born, it is remarkable that the generations continue to follow one another with unfailing regularity, and survive to produce succeeding generations. The Lincoln cabin was lacking in all modern conveniences and most modern comforts. Nancy did not miss them; she had never known them. It would have astonished her to know that the rough logs of the cabin where she lay would one day be enshrined in an imposing granite memorial; she never dreamt she dwelt in

marble halls. But she smiled a wan smile when she was told that her new baby was a boy. Both she and Thomas wanted a son, and their first child had been a girl. They could not give her the name which was waiting for a boy, so they had done the next best thing and called her Sarah.

Who were present when Abraham Lincoln was born?

If you are to believe the stories that are told you in and about Hodgenville, and the people who tell them intend to be truthful, the grandmothers of the entire present population of Larue County must have been there, with a number from counties adjacent. If all the people who are believed to have been present had actually been there, they would have packed the cabin and the front yard.

Nancy Lincoln had two aunts, Polly Friend and Elizabeth Sparrow, living near by, and one of those aunts was her foster mother. She did not lack for the attention which women are able to give to each other at such times. And there were other women in the neighborhood who were ready to assist. We may discount, therefore, the narratives of most of the truthful people who assure us that their maternal relatives were among those present. Of one thing we may be certain: Abraham Lincoln had such care at the time of his birth as was deemed requisite in the backwoods. His mother was not neglected, and the baby was passed around among an adequate group of well-intending women who were present to welcome him.

Not in 1809, but soon afterward, there died in Elizabethtown, Doctor Daniel B. Potter. He left a widow, and a large number of accounts due him from people to whom he had rendered professional service. I have ridden many miles in the Kentucky mountains side by side with the doctor, who kept his forceps within reach so that he did not need to dismount for so simple a matter as the extraction of a tooth, and who was ready for an emergency caused by anything from child-birth to gun-shot wounds. Doctor Potter was one of those hard-riding physicians who wore his life out in his fights with death, and who wasted

little time except the weary waits at each end of life—for both birth and death are tedious processes to hard-worked physicians. He left debts to the amount of \$1,560.35¾. The court appointed a commission to collect the much larger sum that was due him from those who had been his patients, to pay his debts and give the remainder to his widow. The commissioners brought into court their final report, showing that they had been able to collect a total of \$864.89½, leaving the estate still in debt \$695.46¼. The commissioners reported the men who had paid, and among them was the name of Thomas Lincoln. At the time of the doctor's death, Thomas Lincoln owed him an unpaid balance of \$1.46. It is a simple matter, but it shows that when Nancy needed a doctor, she had one, and that Thomas Lincoln paid the bill.

It is not likely that Thomas and Nancy depended on or called a physician when Abraham Lincoln was born. Physicians were too uncertain for dependence at such times. No tradition that I have been able to discover affirms that Doctor Potter or any other physician attended Nancy at the birth of Abraham. A local mid-wife was there; they called her "the granny-woman." Apparently, she did the few simple things that needed to be done, and Nancy's two aunts and the neighbor women assisted. In due time Thomas Lincoln stood awkwardly beside the bed of Nancy, and looked into the face of his son. Nancy also looked. The new-born babe is seldom an object of beauty save as affection gives prophetic vision of qualities that lie more than skin-deep. But Thomas and Nancy were both happy.

When I first visited Hodgenville and recorded the traditions that were then obtainable, I gathered, as it had come down from the women-folk who were present that day or who called during the days that followed, that Thomas Lincoln was kind to Nancy, and immensely proud of his boy. Maternal pride is not circumscribed by petty considerations of pulchritude. Abraham was a fine baby; we may be sure that all the women said so, and no one disputed the fact. Thomas Lincoln was a solid,

coln, which since 1909 has furnished most biographers with their data. Of that book it is high praise to say that it is not always wrong. It will be cited in a few places in the present work, but for the most part it is to be rejected.*

The journey of the family of Abraham Lincoln, the grand-father, from Virginia to Kentucky, occurred in 1782, when Thomas was four years old. In the spring of 1786, the pioneer Abraham was killed by an Indian. He left a widow, three sons and two daughters.

From the time he was sixteen until he left Kentucky, we are able to account for Thomas Lincoln in the various official records of the two Kentucky counties of Washington and Hardin.†

In 1795 the name Thomas Lincoln appears on the tax lists of Washington County, Kentucky, as a minor above sixteen years of age, and also on May 16, 1796, as a white male above sixteen and under twenty-one. In 1799 he is listed for the first time as above twenty-one. If he was above sixteen in 1795, and above twenty-one in 1799, he must have been born between 1777 and 1779, which accords with the date given by his son, Abraham Lincoln the President.

There was fear of an Indian uprising in 1795, and Thomas Lincoln, then a boy of seventeen, served thirty days from June eighth to July seventh, as a private in Captain George Ewing's Company of Washington County Militia, under command of Brigadier General John Caldwell.

President Lincoln has told us that his father became "a wandering laboring boy" who grew up "literally without education," and that "before he was grown, he passed one year as a farm-hand with his uncle Isaac on Watauga." That year of

^{*}That book furnished the material for the inscriptions upon the walls of the Memorial at Hodgenville, and those inscriptions are sadly inaccurate.

[†]I refer to my Paternity of Abraham Lincoln, for a list of important dates, arranged particularly to account for his movements in the period preceding the birth of Abraham. Other important dates are now given here, for the first time.



PARLOR IN THE EDWARDS HOUSE Where Abraham Lincoln married Mary Todd Photographed for this work by Eugene J. Hall



absence must have been 1798. There are authentic and indisputable Kentucky records bearing his name in every other calendar year from 1795 to 1816.

In 1800, Thomas Lincoln was taxed as a resident of Washington County, above twenty-one years. He owned a horse. On August 5, 1802, he was listed and taxed in Washington County, and still owned one horse. Cattle and hogs were not usually taxed in Washington County at this period, so we do not know whether he had any other property; probably one horse, owned before the boy became of age,* was his only taxable property. After 1802 his name disappears from the Washington County tax lists.

It has been affirmed by many writers that Mordecai, the eldest brother of Thomas Lincoln, inherited the whole of his father's property; and that under the old Virginia law of primogeniture, Thomas, and perhaps with him the middle brother Josiah, was wronged out of his part of his father's estate.

This is a serious charge against Mordecai, by some authors extended to include Josiah also, and it has no known foundation. Indubitably the English law of primogeniture, which was the law in Virginia, held in Kentucky. As Abraham Lincoln died intestate, and all his children were minors, the court appointed administrators to serve until the eldest boy was of age. But it does not follow that Mordecai, either alone or in conspiracy with Josiah, was otherwise than just to his younger brothers and sisters. We have good reason to believe that in this, as in all else, Mordecai was a just man and a faithful older brother; and we have reason also to respect his brother Josiah.

Mordecai, when he came of age, accepted his inheritance under the law, for he, only, had standing in court as the heir-at-law of his deceased father. But soon after Josiah came of age, we find Mordecai selling part of his father's land, and Josiah buying land for cash; and, in 1802, we find Mordecai selling more land,

^{*}He probably owned a horse before he journeyed into East Tennessee to spend a year working on the farm of his uncle.

Hanks a blonde. She was tall, dark and sallow. Her hair was dark brown, almost black. Her eyes were small and gray. She had a prominent forehead, a feature remarked by all the relatives who have given account of her, and it was regarded by them as an indication of unusual mental ability. She was above medium height, and weighed about one hundred and thirty pounds. She had a slight stoop, and her appearance suggested a tubercular tendency. Her face was thin, sharp and angular. Her disposition was cheerful, and she had an exuberant spirit which sometimes broke over restraint and expressed itself in care-free merriment; but this mood alternated with one of melancholy. All who knew her and whose reports have come down to us, remark the habitual sadness of her features in repose. She was gentle, capable and strong; amiable, friendly and kind. Nancy's mother could write, but that was not true either of the Hankses generally or of the Sparrows among whom Nancy spent her girlhood. She, however, received some education; we do not know how much, but her relations thought it remarkable, and considering her circumstances it may be so regarded.

When, in 1851, Thomas Lincoln died, Abraham Lincoln broke over his habitual reserve, and spoke somewhat freely to his partner, William H. Herndon, of his father and also of his mother:

Mr. Lincoln himself said to me in 1851, on receiving news of his father's death, that whatever might be said of his parents, and however unpromising the early surroundings of his mother may have been, she was highly intellectual by nature, had a strong memory, acute judgment, and was cool and heroic.*

He was not speaking of her direct influence upon him, but of qualities which he believed himself to have inherited from her, when he used the much quoted expression regarding his mother; but we have good reason to believe that had she lived she would have had a potent influence for good upon his youth and young

^{*}Herndon's Lincoln, i, p. 13. All references to Herndon's Lincoln are to the first edition.



